

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

HOUSEHOLDS AS PRODUCERS 83

To make calabashes Ka'anami buys dried half-gourds, then scrapes the excess vegetable matter from the inside and burns designs on the outer surface with hot irons. The tools are simple, merely a number of wood-handled iron blades made by the local blacksmith. Add to this charcoal for the fire to heat the irons, and the list of materials necessary for his occupation is complete. In the dry season when he is not planting Ka'anami makes about two calabashes a day on Fridays and Saturdays—the two days before Magumeri's market day, on Sunday. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday he goes to other markets or makes calabashes on commission for people who want special orders. On the average he makes about fifteen calabashes per month for the four months of the wet season. For the dry season he estimates that his productivity goes up to about twenty a month. This means that on his own Ka'anami produces about 250 to 300 calabashes a year. If this sounds like a lot, it must be remembered that he sells them for anything between forty cents and seventy-five cents each. Subtract from this the cost of the gourds (about fifteen cents each) and add the fact that some weeks he doesn't sell all his wares, and it is easy to realize that the entire proceeds of Ka'anami's craft-work do not produce much beyond \$150 to \$200 per year in income.

Ka'anami's father, his father's younger brother, and one of his father's younger brother's sons, plus a man who for years has been a subordinate to Ka'anami's father all live in adjoining compounds and all make calabashes. Each compound is to a large extent independent, yet all originally were under the guidance and direction of Ka'anami's father who considers himself the leader of this group of households. If higher political authorities in the village wish to contact anyone in this group they invariably do so through Ka'anami's father thus recognizing his leadership and giving it legitimacy in the community.

In summary this way of productive life is far removed from the regular eight-hour day of the industrial worker. Ka'anami could no doubt produce more calabashes if he worked more rapidly and for longer hours and more days a week. But he doesn't have to—his efforts support his family and himself, and Ka'anami likes his life. He enjoys sitting in an entrance hut in his part of town with friends and relatives, people he has known all his life, talking, joking, gossiping, and moralizing about rural events. Indeed even a casual brush with Ka'anami's life indicates that he sits talking and resting in the shade for long periods of time. But he works too, and when he does he often sits around a common fire at his father's entrance hut with the other calabash makers talking or singing softly while each man looks to his own hot irons and unfinished gourds. Even when he works alone in his own compound or with his brother Dolo, friends come to visit him, or he dandles his infant daughter on his lap while cleaning out a gourd. His family, his friends and neighbors, and his fellow workers, are all interwoven into the pattern of his household life and his relation to the surrounding households. Thus the social and economic side of Ka'anami's life is part of the same fabric—this is the human side of cottage industry.

In the case below we see another household in which *tada njima* or client apprentices are more prominent and yet many of the same kinds of social and economic relations prevail.

MALA .BUKAR, THE BUTCHER The butcher's craft, although lucrative in relation to other activities like Ka'anami's or blacksmithing, is a low status occupation, and many butchers including Mala Bukar are quick to say that

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2: Rosman

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[For Kanuri attitudes toward various occupations see categories 829, 554, and also category 116, pp. 303-318.]

992 father and son, though of course kinship has nothing to do with
609 setting up that relationship in the first place. In this sense,
571 the household functions like a kin group but is not itself a product of kinship.

592 The Kanuri do not hire servants, nor do they typically hire
• 461 other Kanuri to work for them. A man's labor is not for hire,
571 to be paid for in cash. Though the Kanuri have long used money in commercial dealings, its use has never been extended to labor. One man works for another because that is part of his obligation which grows out of their relationship. A tata njima works for the master of the household, not for any immediate payment such as wages, but because the relationship between a tata njima and his master entails labor on the part of the tata njima. Not only is he expected to perform any task asked of him by the household head, he is also expected always to act in the interests of the household head, and constantly to protect those interests. Tata njima who are part of the household of a trader help him in the distribution and sale of his goods and travel to other markets selling goods in his behalf; they also farm for him during the rainy season, and do all sorts of tasks about the compound.

592 In turn, the head of the household is obliged to provide
571 his tata njima with shelter and with clothing, and to feed
[583] them. He provides the luwaliram for male members of the household, and stands in as luwali for females. After a divorce,
[586] both man and woman may return to his household. He is also ex-

563 grown up as a Muslim, will only speak of his background reluctantly or
829 confidentially. Pagan groups in Kanuri towns, who are usually Banana
or Gwosa peoples from the Cameroons, manifest many of the characteristics
typically associated with minority groups everywhere. They often speak
of the equality of all men in the eyes of God, and proclaim privately
that they are just as good and deserving of dignity and respect as the
Kanuri majority. Stories of unfair treatment and all kinds of unjust
discrimination are easily elicited. The Kanuri, on the other hand, openly
despise them, referring to them as a general class of lower status
people - kurdi (infidels) who were used as slaves in the old days. Despite
these status differentials, the pagans in the Kanuri towns live in a
[464] symbiotic relationship with the majority group. They supply the Kanuri
[273] with a cheap cash labour supply and brew the liquor that many Kanuri
[461] like to drink but would consider abhorrent to manufacture. The pagans
obtain, therefore, a large ready market for their products (i.e. their
brew, and their unskilled manual labour), because of the low regard in
which these two activities are held by the Kanuri.

Pagans who are known to have Muslim sectors, such as the Babur
tribe of southern Bornu or the Yoruba of western Nigeria are still re-
garded as low status but are not nearly so unanimously despised as the
local brewers of beer with whom the Kanuri have daily contacts. It is
probable that the existence of urban classes and a nobility among the
Babur and the Yoruba which is originally absent among the Gwosa and the
Banana, aids in differentiating their status as ethnic groups for the Kan-
uri.

The Ibo people of south-east Nigeria are considered to come
under the rubric of the despised pagan group, although it is known that

443 if he has not sold all his wares at the Magumeri Sunday market. This
322 works out to approximately sixteen calabashes per month which he pro-
433 duces for market sales. By questioning and observation, it was calcu-
lated that he gets private orders for another fifteen, making a total of
thirty-one calabashes per month. During four months of the wet season,
he does not produce for the market at all, but takes private orders
which he estimates at twenty a month. Using these figures, his yearly
production of calabashes comes to two hundred and ninety-seven.

435 The raw material costs him one shilling per calabash (cost
of charcoal is negligible) and his selling price runs from 3/3 to 5/-
or about 4/ on the average. This gives him a net profit of about 3/-
434 per unit product. Thus his yearly returns on his craft work bring him
a cash income of approximately £45.0.0.; when this is added to his crop
production Ka'anami's annual income in cash and kind can be placed at
£86.0.0.

• 461 The work pattern described here is not a strenuous one. Be-
sides his farmwork, Ka'anami could no doubt produce more calabashes if
he worked more rapidly and for longer hours. However, to obtain his
living in Bornu at present this is not necessary. Ka'anami likes his
present life. He enjoys sitting in an entrance hut in his own quarter
of town, with friends and relatives, talking, joking, gossiping and
moralising about rural events. Indeed, a casual, rather than a careful
look into his life, might easily persuade the observer that Ka'anami
spends all his time sitting around in the shade talking and listening
to friends and relatives. When working, he often sits around a common
fire with other calabash makers, talking, or singing softly with his
fellow craftsmen (most of whom are his agnatic relatives). Even when
working alone, friends come and chat with him as he carves the designs

- 461 on the gourds. Thus his social life and craft production are inextricably interwoven. This is the human side of cottage industry. Wife, relatives, children and friends, all are intermeshed in the social context of his economic activity.

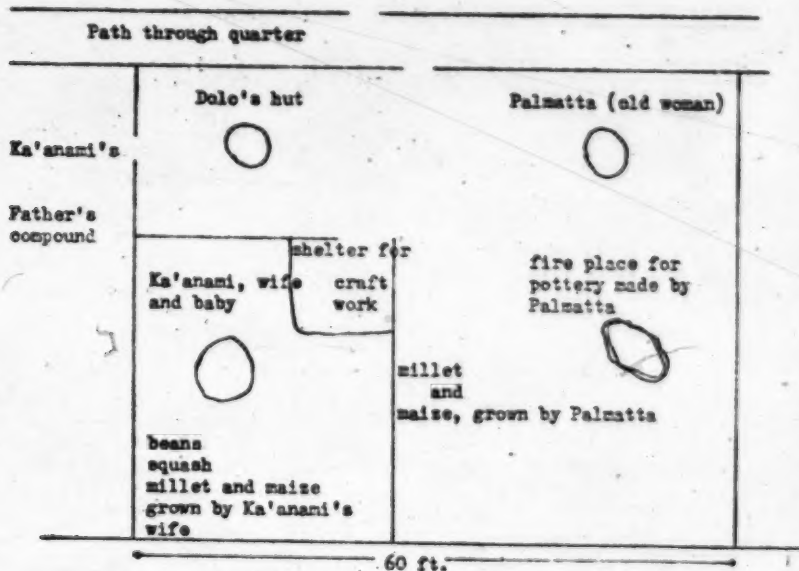
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When steel enamel ware and other receptacles, mass produced in the factories of industrialized countries, are used by wider numbers of people, for more and more purposes, and appear at progressively competitive prices, Ka'anami and those like him will come face to face with the modern world.

592 Ka'anami's Compound

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241 small plots of their own at the same time on which they hope to grow cash crops. In 1955, Mala Bukar obtained ten bags of millet and three of groundnuts. Cash value of this crop at prevailing prices is £20.0.0.

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592 Mala Bukar does no actual farm work himself. His apprentices and wives (never working together at the same time and place, plant, hoe and harvest his crop. He does give some directions at the beginning of these operations and he decides on the planting and harvesting dates. The apprentices make the farm work of the wives less essential in this case than is usual. This gives these women a great deal more free time, especially in the wet season, than almost any other married women in town, with the exception of the head dyer's wives. This man also has several apprentices. Mala Bukar's wives spend their productive energies in cooking, bringing water for the household, and selling the hooves of slaughtered animals which their husband gives them as a source of private income for themselves.

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461 Since Mala Bukar's work schedule is tied to the availability of animals for slaughter, it appears at first glance to have a random quality. Exceptions to this are his rigid adherence to Friday as a day of prayer, or at least, no slaughter, and Sunday which is the Kagmeri market day. However, he may butcher a sheep or a goat on the spot on Sunday if the selling is brisk and animals are to be had. Trips to other markets in the vicinity are dependent upon his immediate stocks of meat, and upon what he hears about demand at other markets.

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434 For six months of the year he deals only in sheep and goats (this is not true of butchers at larger centres, where many people can afford beef). One goat costs from 31/- to 40/- and he prepares and sells on the average four per week, at a profit of 2/- to 4/- each, i.e. an average profit of 1/- each or 12/- per week. Sheep cost him usually